

ICEEPSY 2014

## Evolution and evaluation of e-Learning

Sarka Hubackova <sup>a\*</sup><sup>a</sup>*University of Hradec Králové, Rokitanského 62, 500 03 Hradec Králové, Czech Republic*

---

### Abstract

Approximately in the era, where the implementation eLearning courses was at its height at the universities in the Czech Republic, Kathleen M. Frankle, a professor of Maryland university, published her article Blended learning with its subtitle The key to successful web-based training and education. The paper illustrates a rather different way in the implementation of those courses at the American universities. I have selected and shortly paraphrased important points out of her paper. She states an increasing liking for eLearning and suggest that the extreme interest took place, when the university had offered its courses also in the format of blended learning.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of ICEEPSY 2014.

**Keywords:** Evolution; eLearning; evaluation; University; blended learning; eLearning;

---

### 1. Introduction

Approximately in the era, where the implementation eLearning courses was at its height at the universities in the Czech Republic, Kathleen M. Frankle, a professor of Maryland university, published her article Blended learning with its subtitle The key to successful web-based training and education. The paper illustrates a rather different way in the implementation of those courses at the American universities. I have selected and shortly paraphrased important points out of her paper. She states an increasing liking for eLearning and suggest that the extreme interest took place, when the university had offered its courses also in the format of blended learning. She gives the characteristics of classic eLearning courses and arrives to the conclusion: Many students lack the presence of a teacher and of the other students by their study activities. The flexibility of the proceeding which doesn't prescribe

---

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +420493332302

E-mail address: [sarka.hubackova@uhk.cz](mailto:sarka.hubackova@uhk.cz)

any compulsory terms results in the low percentage of the tasks fulfilled in the time given. In the effort to eliminate both students' taunts and teachers' complaints, the blended learning format was introduced. After the passing of both an eLearning and blended learning course students should comment on the different points of each course. The final item of the questionnaire read as follows: The pace of progress in web courses is individual, no obligatory terms are prescribed for you, interaction with your teacher is possible by an e-mail only. Another course contains linkages between traditional eLearning and all features of a teacher-guided course. If both types of courses were at disposal, which one would be your choice? The answer is given without any comment. But we learn that 11% of students would prefer eLearning, 89% would opt for blended learning. (Frankle, 2012).

## 2. Evolution and evaluation of eLearning

Also J. L. Cahill, a participant in doctor studies of eLearning and education technology at the University of the American Middle West, would prefer a course of blended learning format. Her reasons, however, seem to be very person-centred, so I do not quote them. (Cahill 2011) at approximately the same time, in England Kochan and Britz and Seymour announce a panel discussion on the theme of blended learning. The reasons for their decision was the fact that those forms of teaching become more and more popular in higher educational institutions and therefore it is necessary to pay attention to their advantages and disadvantages of their contents and development in the future. The same year M.B. Ligorio and S.Cucchiara from the University in Bari published their paper A model for teaching in higher education (Ligorio, Cucchiara 2011). They suggest a model of university teaching. Firstly, its theoretical reasons are given as follows: an encouragement of student-teacher contacts, unfolding interpersonal relations, collaborative approach to learning. The model integrates an eLearning program and exactly destined courses in traditional contact teaching. Given are four types of such devices. The structure of it and students' activities and roles in it are described, but it can not be denoted quite positive which subject is dealt with. Only the fact is given that the model had run through a six years experiment before its publishing.

Comprehensive instruction in the basis of blended learning is given in the paper Blended learning (Hancock, Wong 2011). It proceeds from earlier literature, its characteristic features of blended learning reads as follows: a fine integration of carefully chosen and mutually supplementing contact and electronic approaches. Its sources of electronic teaching is constructivism and cognitivism. Monitoring its extending the paper says that the practice of linking electronic learning and contact learning had started as early as in 1990. Its extending, however, has proceeded very rapidly. The paper predicts that – in accordance with the research – by 2014 at least 40% of learning electronic programs in the USA will have the format of blended learning. This guess is being considered as an indication – also in accordance with specialists' view – that blended learning is not only a trend. Other details may stand out in connection with the resource book Teaching formal written English published by Frydrychova Klimova in the Czech Republic. She bases on the opinions of authors noted above in this paper and it is an evidence of the fact that the North American trend quoted here has been caught also in the Czech Republic. The book is meant as a broadly based introduction to the contemporary foreign language teaching. In some of its parts it is a guide to author's eLearning Course of academic writing. Another part is devoted to blended learning. In this connection you can read a very interesting suggestion of a similar frame for future preparation of both electronic and traditional (textbook) materials. (Frydrychova Klimova, 2012). In accordance with the quotation of the researches already noted is said: During the last decade the blended courses have become the overriding type of published courses. The language skills – with reference to the literature – based on aural reception should be the object of classic contact teaching and any textbook (reading and writing) should proceed in electronic form.

In this way the perspective of electronic teaching form may be shown, I don't think that the period of the classic eLearning used in language teaching is ending. I see its feature in the fulfilling of some assumptions and I take the following of them as most important:

1. The return of eLearning to its original division as to the supporting learning or teaching device.
2. New views of a language system will be considered, the connection found will be employed and entrusted to eLearning to make logically close sets of information's.
3. The motivation factors and elements of a feedback will most likely be incorporated more distinctly into new programs.
4. The more distinct view will be employed of groups or individuals for whom the program is designed.

5. The relation of the program contents to the knowledge the users of the course bring from proceeding study forms of the language will be secured and clearly defined.

6. The particular program will be supplemented by a teacher. He will make himself familiar with students' knowledge and study possibilities earlier. The usage of a program will be up to the students. Any connection between exams and program used will be sorted out.

7. There will be possible to organize experimental student groups and to find by means of simple experiments the significant advantages of eLearning teaching.

The problems spoken above have several causes. Perhaps the basic trouble is that there are three things termed by the same concept: the new teaching method (very seldom), a new form of a teaching process (more often), a new device of teaching and learning process (most often). That became apparent even in the fact, how many quite different definitions of the concept given exist not only in our country but also in the USA. Those definitions are not, as might seem at first glance, a mere play with words, but they show quite distinctly the author's view of the electronic teaching form, of the goals its application and of contents communicated. In older academic papers you often cannot define quite well, what exactly the author thinks until you meet a definition. In many studies that state remains the same even nowadays.

The early stage, even different programs communicating knowledge had been sold under the term of eLearning, had quite different evaluating criteria, others than had been the ones of didactic or common pedagogy. It lasted for a certain time, the evaluation paid attention just to that criterion. And it cannot be said that it would be the more important even when the teaching forms or methods were in question. Some available internet articles show that the German way of the acceptance of the electronic teaching form might be a good practice also in our country.

The facts given, however, became a basis for the conception of further explanations. They try to emphasize first of all pedagogical views, even if they admit that considering the technical aspect of the new form and the interest in it were not an insignificant thing during that time. But those aspects are overriding that may be classified as pedagogically important by the application of electronic form in foreign language learning. Keeping track of those teaching models that are the basis of eLearning appeared as important for cleaning up those points of view. To follow domestic literature had occurred as a significant motive of further proceeding. It turned out that the knowledge of the new method and the concern of its basis did not become common knowledge of propagators and creators of new learning programs from their beginnings. It succeeded with a certain delay and in a very simplified form. The knowledge of that basis meant for many authors a very important return to the didactic grounds of new form. But it was only superficial and it did not pay almost any attention to its adaptation stage. That stage lasted for several years. ELearning did not occur as a teaching device quite suitable for practice and therefore not quite marketable. To be more suitable for practice it was modified even in its basic elements. It had been accepted without any criticism as an electronic teaching form. Three basic factors had been reflected, two of them connected with each other. The fact in question was that the original programs were really meant as a supporting process helping to a learning individual, that their chief target places are not universities. Their rich program spectrum was covered by industry giants owing enough money for starting further research and testing the application of electronic teaching form. In a way, all of that had reflected in introducing eLearning in our conditions. Industrial and business firms grasped that new teaching forms trying to gain a vehicle for their employees, that would even in spite of more costs specify the working skills of employees. In question were the skills that the employees could not gain at school during their childhood. The implementation of eLearning at universities had not such a financial coverage. There was a lack of money for further research and evaluation of eLearning. And just that process was often supplanted by other criteria showing and enumerating different advantages and disadvantages of the new education form.

### **3. Students' evaluation of eLearning**

The above mentioned could be demonstrated with the results of our research. Through questionnaires we investigated the form of teaching that suits the students of our university best. In the survey fifty five students of the first year participated. Most students prefer blended learning, eLearning follows and the face-to-face teaching remains last.

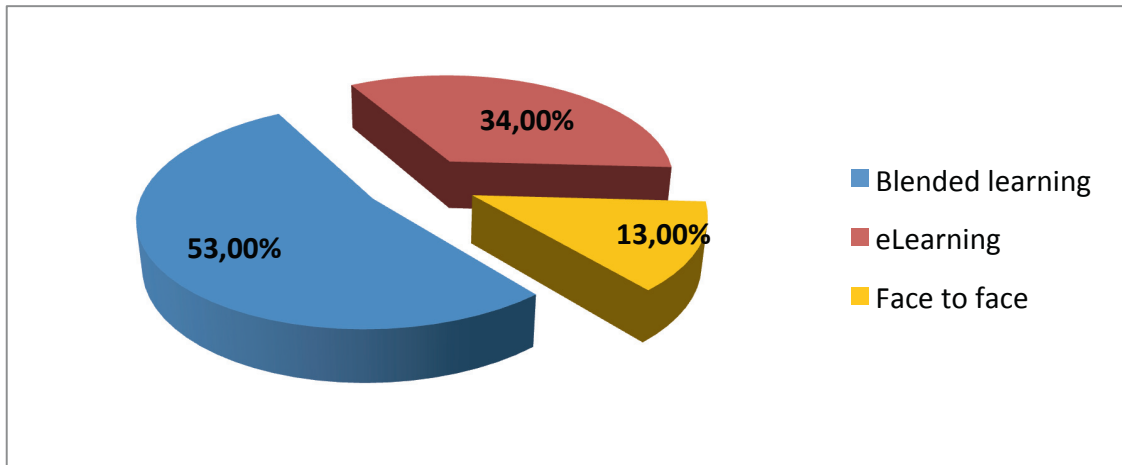


Fig. 1

The following chart reflects the results achieved by students in the entrance test and the test at the end of the semester in various forms of teaching. The biggest difference (achievement) was made by students taught through blended learning - 28 per cent.

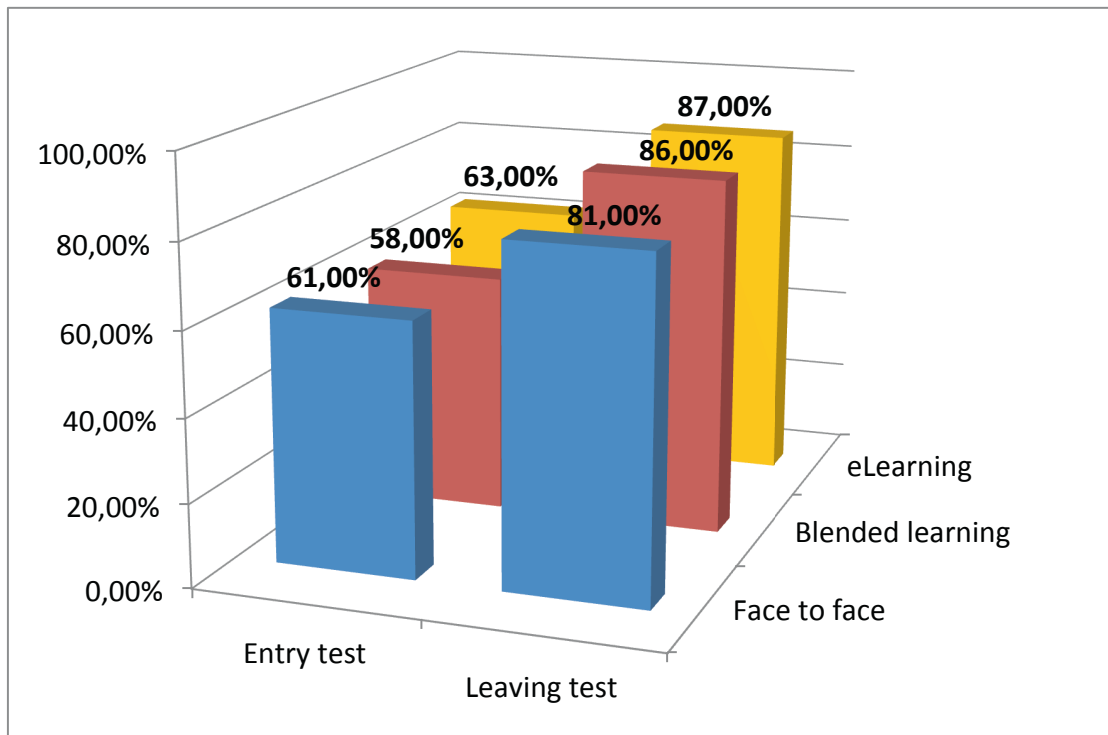


Fig. 2.

#### 4. Conclusion

The problems of university student motivation were not solved in a satisfactory way up to this time. The same is true about feedback as seen by original electronic programs. Only quite solitary are the experiments for finding out what and for how long a time students manage to master by means of those programs. Didactical effectivity of eLearning was questioned by means of not proceeding from the facts but from the assumptions of new programs. High attention therefore must be paid to the elements without which a new period of creating and implementation of eLearning in language teaching is impossible in case that it should dispose the stagnation mentioned. As those elements we see firstly a new delimitation of program contents, new views of the language systems, delimitation of teaching competence and language skills etc. It would be possible to think properly about and to solve the problems of motivation, feedback, the autonomy of a learning individual etc. The assumption is that there will be time costs, personnel possibilities of the evaluating of real results and teaching advantages of eLearning in comparison to other teaching forms.

#### References

- Cahill, J. L. (2011). Implementing online or hybrid courses in a traditional university. [online] *Elearning Papers* 24, 2011. Retrieved October 09, 2012 from: <http://elearningpapers.eu/en/article/Implementing-online-or-hybrid-courses-in-a-traditional-university>. 2011
- Frankle, K. M. (2012). *Blended Learning: The Key to Successful Web-Based Training and Education*. [online] . Retrieved October 09, 2012 from: <http://www.citeconsortium.org/PDF/articles-papers-presentations/World%20Congress%20Paper%201014%20-%20July%2005.pdf>.
- Frydrychová Klímová, B. (2012). *Teaching formal written English*. Vyd. 1. Hradec Králové. Gaudeamus. 2012.
- Kochang, A., Britz, J., Seymour, T. (2006). Panel Discussion. Hybrid/blended learning: Advantages, Challenges, Design and Future Directions. In: *Proceedings of the 2006 Informing science and IT education joint conference*, Salford UK, s. 155-157. 2006
- Lígorio, M. B., Cucchiara, (2011). S. Blended collaborative constructive participation. A model for teaching in higher education. [online] *Elearning Papers* 27, 2011. Retrieved October 09, 2012 from: <http://elearningpapers.eu/en/news/elearning-papers-27-designing-learning-published>
- Schröder, H. (1988). *Aspekte einer Didaktik-Methodik des fachbezogenen Fremdsprachenunterrichts (Deutsch als Fremdsprache)* : unter besonderer Berücksichtigung sozialwissenschaftlicher Fachtexte. Frankfurt am Main : Lang, 1988. 210 s.
- Smith, R. (2011). *Motivational factors in e-learning*. Retrieved October 15, 2011 from <http://www.ruthcsmith.com/GWU%20Papers/Motivation.pdf>.
- Průcha, J. (2005). *Moderní pedagogika*. Praha: Portál, 2005.